



OLD AGE PEOPLE IMPACT ON INDIAN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

The elderly population of India is projected to increase to about 300 million by 2050. Families, the traditional source of support for the elderly in India, are getting smaller as result of reduction in fertility and, in rural areas, due to migration. Changing norms and attitudes on intergenerational relations and filial piety have the potential to weaken traditional social and family support structures that the elderly depend on. As institutional and welfare support systems are lacking in India, changes to the family and social support structures will have serious implications for ageing in India. The demographic, economic, family and health perspectives presented in this Chapter reveal some of the complexities of the ageing in India. They show that the nature, type and direction of support between the generations depends on the situation and resources of both parents and children, embedded within the wider social and cultural values of support and care, and the expectations and meanings attributed to these values. The perspectives presented also raise important questions about the relationships, roles and responsibilities of individuals, families and the state. A man's life is normally divided into five main stages namely infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. In each of these stages an individual has to find himself in different situations and face different problems. The old age is not without problems. In old age physical strength deteriorates, mental stability diminishes; money power becomes bleak coupled with negligence from the younger generation.

KEYWORDS: *old age, support structures, family and health, childhood*

There are 81million older people in India-11 lakh in Delhi itself. According to an estimate nearly 40% of senior citizens living with their families are reportedly facing abuse of one kind or another, but only 1 in 6 cases actually comes to light. Although the President has given her assent to the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act which punishes children who abandon parents with a prison term of three months or a fine, situation is grim for elderly people in India.

According to NGOs incidences of elderly couples being forced to sell their houses are very high. Some elderly people have also complained that in case of a property dispute they feel more helpless when their wives side with their children. Many of them suffer in silence as they fear humiliation or are too scared to speak up. According to them a phenomenon called 'grand dumping' is becoming common in urban areas these days as children are being increasingly intolerant of their parents' health problems.

After a certain age health problems begin to crop up leading to losing control over one's body, even not recognizing own family owing to Alzheimer are common in old age. It is then children began to see their parents as burden. It is these parents who at times wander out of their homes or are thrown out. Some dump their old parents or grandparents in old-age homes and don't even come to visit them anymore. Delhi has nearly 11 lakh senior citizens but there are only 4 governments' run homes for them and 31 by NGOs, private agencies and charitable trusts. The facilities are lacking in government run homes.

RIGHTS OF THE ELDERLY

- Parents cannot be evicted from a house without due process of law if they have been staying there from before. There is three enactments that can be applied.
- Under section 125 of the CrPC, a magistrate can order a child to maintain his old parents under the Maintenance of Parents Act.
- The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act say an aged parent can demand maintenance from children in the same way that a wife can demand it from her husband.
- The Domestic Violence Act too provides parents with the right to seek relief from any kind of abuse.

A National Policy on older persons was announced in January 1999 which identified a number of areas of intervention-financial security, healthcare and nutrition, shelter, education, welfare, protection of life and property for the wellbeing of older persons in the country. A National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) was constituted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to operationalize the National Policy on older persons.

Ageing

- Ageing is a continuous, irreversible, universal process, which starts from conception till the death of an individual.
- However, the age at which one's productive contribution declines and one tends to be economically dependent can probably be treated as the onset of the aged stage of life.



- National Elderly Policy defines person of 60+ age group as elderly.

Population figures on ageing

- Age division of Indian population (0-14) is 30.8%, (15-59) is 60.3%, (60+) is 8.6%.
- According to Population Census 2011, there are nearly 104 million elderly persons in India.
- It has increased from 5.5% in 1951 to 8.6% in 2011.
- Projected a rise upto 19% in 2050.
- As regards rural and urban areas, more than 73 million persons i.e. 71% of elderly population resides in rural areas while 31 million or 29% of elderly population are in urban area.

Feminisation of ageing

- Among the challenges which India faces, UNPF report says the feminisation of ageing remained a key one.
- The sex ratio of the elderly has increased from 938 women to 1,000 men in 1971 to 1,033 in 2011 and is projected to increase to 1,060 by 2026.
- The report also noted that between 2000 and 2050, the population of 80-plus people would have grown 700% "with a predominance of widowed and highly dependent very old women" and so the special needs of such old women would need significant focus of policy and programmes.

Problems associated with old age

- **Social**
 - Indian society is undergoing rapid transformation under the impact of industrialization, urbanization, technical & technological change, education and globalization.
 - Consequently, the traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion and adaptation, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties that were the hallmark of the traditional family.
 - Industrialization has replaced the simple family production units by the mass production and the factory.
 - Negligence by kids towards their old parents.
 - Disillusionment due to retirement.
 - Feeling of powerlessness, loneliness, uselessness and isolation in elderly.
 - Generational gap.
- **Financial**
 - Retirement and dependence of elderly on their child for basic necessity.
 - Sudden increase in out of pocket expenses on treatment.
 - Migration of young working-age persons from rural area have negative impacts on the elderly, living alone or with only the spouse usually poverty and distress.
 - Insufficient housing facility.

Health

- Multiple disabilities among the elders in old age.
- Health issues like blindness, locomotor disabilities and deafness are most prevalent.
- Mental illness arising from senility and neurosis.
- Absence of geriatric care facilities at hospitals in rural area.

Recent initiatives by government

▪ **Integrated Programme for Older Persons(IPOP)**

- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is a nodal agency for the welfare of elderly people. The main objective of the scheme is to improve the quality of life of older persons by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities, etc.

▪ **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana(RVY)**

- This scheme is run by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This is a central sector scheme funded from the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund. The fund was notified in the year 2016. All unclaimed amounts from small savings accounts, PPF and EPF are to be transferred to this fund.
- Under the RVY scheme, aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to BPL category who suffer from age-related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and locomotor disabilities. The aids and assistive devices, viz walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers/crutches, tripods/quad pods, hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial dentures and spectacles are provided to eligible beneficiaries.
- The scheme is being implemented by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), which is a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

▪ **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme(IGNOAPS)**

- The Ministry of Rural Development runs the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) that extends social assistance for poor households for the aged, widows, disabled, and in cases of death where the breadwinner has passed away.
- Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to person of 60 years and above and belonging to family living below poverty line as per the criteria prescribed by Government of India. Central assistance of Rs 200 per month is provided to person in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs 500 per month to persons of 80 years and above.

▪ **Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana(VPBY)**

- This scheme is run by the Ministry of Finance. The Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) was first launched in 2003 and then relaunched in 2014. Both



are social security schemes for senior citizens intended to give an assured minimum pension on a guaranteed minimum return on the subscription amount.

- **The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana**
 - The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PNVVY) was launched in May 2017 to provide social security during old age. This is a simplified version of the VPBY and will be implemented by the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India.
 - Under the scheme, on payment of an initial lump sum amount ranging from Rs 1,50,000 for a minimum pension of Rs 1000 per month to a maximum of Rs 7,50,000/- for a maximum pension of Rs 5,000 per month, subscribers will get an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum payable monthly/quarterly/half-yearly/annually.
 - The Centre will bear 75 percent of the total budget and the state government will contribute 25 percent of the budget, for activities up to district level.
- **Vayoshreshtha Samman**
 - Conferred as a National award, and given to eminent senior citizens & institutions under various categories for their contributions on International day of older persons on 1st October.

Legal backings

- **Article 41** and **Article 46** are the constitutional provisions for elderly persons. Although directive principles are not enforceable under the law, but it creates a positive obligation towards the state while making any law.
- **Section 20** of **Hindu marriage and adoption act, 1956** makes it obligatory provisions to maintain an aged parents.
- Under **Section 125** of **Criminal Procedure Code**, the elder parents can claim maintenance from their children.
- The **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**, seeks to make it legal for the children or heirs to maintain their parents or senior citizens of the family.
- Convention on the Rights of Older Persons is proposed in United Nations.
- In 1982, the Report of the **World Assembly on Ageing** (also known as "the International Plan on Ageing") was published, which represented the first international debate on the rights of older persons and presented a plan for their implementation.
- The UNPF were tasked with implementing the Plan of the Second World Assembly which adopted "**Madrid International Plan**" on ageing in 2002.

Contributions to society

- Elderly peoples carry immense experience of their personal and professional life, society at large needs to channelise those experiences for a better tomorrow.
- They can provide a vital generational link for upcoming generations. It provides support and stability to families and society at large.
- Grandparents in joint families provide a crucial link for transferring values and morals to the younger generation in their initial years, thereby contributing towards upbringing of better human beings and responsible citizens.
- Acknowledging seniors' contributions would help to make ours a more age-inclusive society that does not pit one generation against the other.
- Their deep cultural impressions and social experiences provide the necessary buffer against intolerance, violence and hate crimes which provides stability in society especially in the era of hate and crime. They can play a significant role in easing out societal tensions, both within and outside families through their insight and understanding.

What measures can be taken?

- Increasing the monthly pension of elderly to a minimum of Rs 2,000 per month.
- Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Housing for the aged, particularly the aged poor, must be a priority.
- Assisted living facilities for indigent elderly, particularly those with age-related issues like dementia, needs policy focus.
- More tax benefits, or at least removing tax on deposit interest for seniors.
- Enhancing the geriatric care health infrastructure especially in rural areas.
- Allocation of special budget for elderly population at both levels.
- Providing entertainment facilities like libraries and clubs at panchayat level.
- Appreciations for the contributions of elderly at village level.

CONCLUSION

- Social security is the concurrent responsibility of the central and state governments as mandated under Indian constitution i.e., Well-being of senior citizens – Article 41 in particular and 46 in general of Indian constitution. In this regard, National Policy on Senior Citizen, 2011 was framed.
- For the welfare and care for the older persons, we must focus on the protection of already existing social support systems/traditional social institutions such as family and kinship, neighborhood bonding, community bonding and community participation must be revived and kins should show sensitivity towards elderly citizens.



REFERENCES

1. *Building a Knowledge Base on Population Ageing in India (BKPAI), 2011, a survey of elderly in seven states — Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal —interviewed about 8,329 household and 9,852 elderly residing in these households (BKPAI, 2012).*
2. *Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI), pilot round, 2010, was conducted in four states--Rajasthan, Punjab, Kerala and Karnataka-- and surveyed about 1500 people. The analysis presented here is based on individuals aged 60 and above (N =583).*
3. *The scheme, formerly known as National Old-Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), was introduced in 1995, paid Rs.75/month to destitute elderly with no adult son. The scheme was renamed in 2007 and eligibility age raised to 65 and cash increased to Rs.200/month. The scheme was revised again in 2011 with eligibility age lowered to 60 and cash for those above 80 increased to Rs.500/month. Some state governments provide additional money on top of the Rs.200 provided by the Central Government.*
4. *Disease profiles of the elderly indicate that about half of the profile is due to communicable diseases, 40 per cent due to non-communicable diseases and the rest due to accidents and injuries (Kowal et al., 2012).*